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International Arbitration

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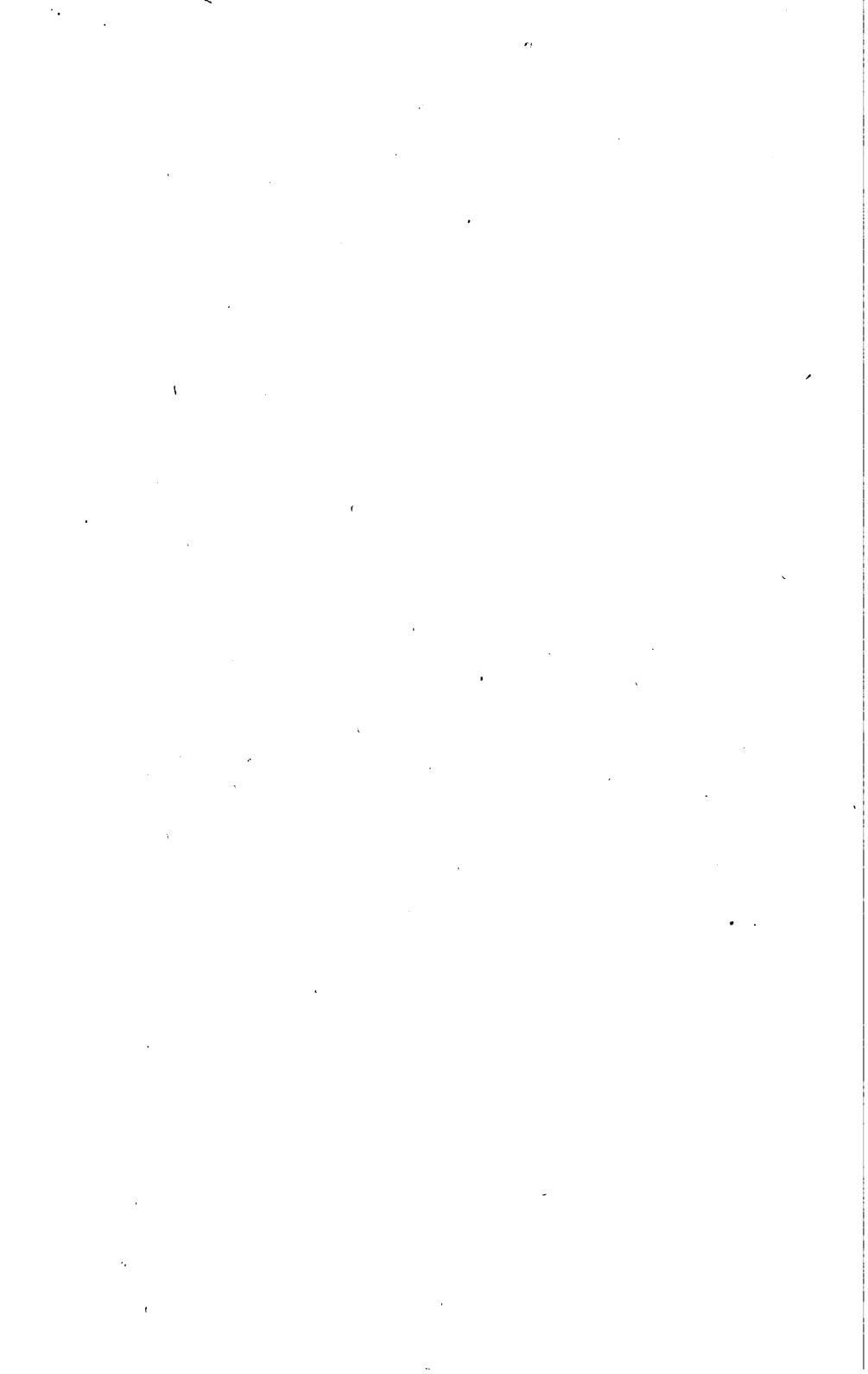
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INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION:

ITS DIFFICULTIES AND ADVANTAGES.

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A PAPER READ AT A CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS, HELD AT
MANCHESTER, SEPT. 30TH, 1873, TO CONSIDER THE SUBJECT
OF INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION.

BY
THE REV. JOHN HYDE.

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INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION:

ITS DIFFICULTIES AND ADVANTAGES.

THERE are some propositions connected with the subject of International Arbitration so self-evident that they can excite no controversy. Among such the following may be cited :—

- (1) War is a frightful calamity, if at any time justifiable, only when it is the sole means of preventing an even greater evil.
- (2) War of itself settles no dispute ; it only displays which of the combatants is the stronger. All settlements of disputes are effected by diplomacy after the mutual exhaustion which war has produced.
- (3) In the settlements of disputes after war, the arrangements are not often based on justice : the terms of treaties of peace are generally dictated by conquering strength, and submitted to by conquered weakness.
- (4) In the nature of things, and as an historical fact, such treaties can only endure so long as the victor remains relatively the stronger, and the vanquished remains conscious of his relative inferiority in force. And,

- (5) If the questions in dispute between nations could have been settled by international arbitration without war, mankind in every sense would have been the gainer.

Such propositions being admitted, it may well be asked, Why, then, is not a system of international arbitration universally adopted ?

This question brings us face to face with the difficulties which lie in the way of the adoption of this, the only rational way of settling international disputes. It would be presumption to speak of those difficulties as other than grave. The real point at issue is—are they insuperable ? At present, public opinion is far more in favour of war than of arbitration ; the machinery for arbitrating has almost entirely to be created ; there does not exist an authoritative code of international law, nor an adequate international legislature to enact such a code, nor any international tribunal to administer it. So far as international relations are concerned, the world may almost be said to be only emerging from a state of barbarous feudalism, each nation doing what seemeth good in its own eyes. The sign of our emergence is that thoughtful and earnest men are beginning to bestir themselves, and to agitate for international organisation, international law, and the prevention of war. In this fact may be found elements of hope. Progressing civilisation has done much for individual nations. It has gradually abolished internecine war ; induced provinces, counties, cities, towns, and individuals to refer their several disputes to legislatures and law courts ; superseded the maintenance of rights by armed

force; substituted civil processes for free fights, trial by jury for trial by combat; divested doughty barons of companies of bellicose retainers; replaced the duello by actions for defamation of character. What civilisation has achieved for individual nations, we wish to see accomplished for nations collectively; and just as internecine war has been outgrown, we wish to see international war superseded. We do not deny that difficulties abound; but we say that what has been proved to be possible for a nation is surely not impossible for a society of nations. From the accomplished facts of national experience we argue for the possibility of similar progress to be realised in international history. He would have been deemed an Utopian dreamer who, during the old times of anarchy and feudalism, had predicted for any one nation the solidarity, the law-respecting order, or the social institutions which now prevail; he is a bold man, and a presumptuous, who would say that while a nation can outgrow feudalism, the nations in their international relations must for ever remain slaves of the old traditions, stagnantly bellicose, isolated, and anarchical.

The causes of war are various, but may be briefly summarised. War is at once an aggression and a defence. In its aggressive aspect, war results from lust of territory, or of dominion, or of glory; it is undertaken to enforce some supposed right, to prevent some fancied injury, to avenge some imagined wrong. In its defensive aspect, war is for the preservation of the national existence, the maintenance of the national honour, the protection of the national territory or other possessions. Individuals—who, like

nations, have their existence to preserve, their honour, which includes position, rights, privileges, to maintain, and their property, territorial or personal, to protect—have agreed, or are compelled by public opinion, to relinquish the use of physical force as the one or final means of defending their possessions, and to rely instead on the administration of law. Our contention is, that the time has come when, in like manner, reason and not force, arbitration and not the sword, international law and international tribunals may prevent aggression and defend rights among nations, and thus settle all international disputes. “Arms” have given place to the “toga” in private matters: why cannot this be extended to international questions?

But it is urged: “There are some questions, such as those which affect the existence of a nation, which no people could consent to refer to arbitration. Is the map of the world so admirably adjusted as that no great changes can henceforth take place?”

When the partition of Poland was effected, the appeal of that country to England and France for moral support and material aid was virtually an asking for arbitration, to be enforced by arms. Had there been an international tribunal when the wretched remnants of Poland were absorbed by Russia, would the Poles have refused to refer their case? It is evident, further, that very important changes in the map of the world have taken place without war. Florida and Louisiana were purchased by the United States without war. Who has not acknowledged that there is a principle of justice in giving to the population of any district the right to determine for itself, to which of

two countries it shall choose to belong? The consolidation of a nation by the free act of its component peoples, is a peaceful and a proper means of establishing a national unity. The principle was, in one of its many possible forms, applied in the union of Scotland and England; in another form, in the introduction of Ireland into the union; in another form, in the annexation of Nice and Savoy to France; and it was attempted to be applied in the reappropriation by victorious Germany of Alsace and Lorraine. The unification of Italy, and more recently of Germany, by the choice of the constituent peoples, has been a gain to those nations, and tends to the stability of Europe. Few will justify all the means which have been employed in any of these instances, but they exemplify a principle which in itself is unexceptionable. If the popular voice of Canada or Australia, expressed in a constitutional manner, demanded separation from the mother-country, their people having determined to set up an independent form of government, this country would never attempt to coerce those colonies into continuing in their *quasi* dependent condition. The costly and bootless blunder of the struggle between England and the North American colonies, the now United States of America, would assuredly never be renewed. In this respect, certainly, "history" would *not* "repeat itself."

On the other hand, it must, I think, be admitted that in such a case as the Sepoy revolt in India, or the revolt of the Southern States from the American republic, the suppression of the revolt by war was justifiable, and arbitration was out of the question. Were the Irish people to revolt, and by force of

arms to attempt to dissolve the union, the insurrection would need to be suppressed by arms. In such cases revolt is organised rioting, and the army by which it is quelled only acts as a more efficient police. Society is based on the idea of order; and order is only possible by resistance to disorder. Should the disorderly employ force, order must be maintained by force. Society is a union of individuals for the purpose of mutual protection; and this means the more effectual, because combined, resistance against whatever could molest or injure its members. I am not a member of the Peace Society, because I am obliged to believe that the armed resistance of invasion by a foreign enemy, or of revolution by a domestic faction, must be regarded as justifiable war. When the war spirit has advanced so far as to have brought about an invasion, or to have fomented a revolution, it is too late to think of arbitrating. Yet even such evils are not without remedy; but the remedy must be sought farther back. The remedy must be found in preventives:—the formation of such a public opinion in all nations, and the adoption of such international laws as would render invasion impossible; the enactment in each nation of such laws, and the establishment of such institutions as should leave peoples no reason for revolution. The formation of such a national public opinion, the enactment of such international laws, and the harmonisation of national institutions to the conditions and requirements of the people, are the means we contemplate for the prevention of the necessity for such justifiable wars.

A second difficulty is urged: "No nation would

consent to refer to arbitration a question immediately affecting its honour."

This objection is certainly open to question. The old argument for the duello applied this proposition to the individual: men were willing to submit questions of property and questions of rights to law-courts, but not questions of honour. Happily, in this country at least, society has outgrown this fallacy as it refers to the individual. The incident of the duel between two members of parliament, and the sudden popping up of the cock pheasant, thinking which to be a policeman made both the valiant gentlemen run away, has in England covered the whole business with ridicule. The duels between German students—the nose-slashing once so common—are, fortunately, growing to be only traditions of the German universities. I must think that even France will not long be able to endure the absurd reports of the quarrels of newspaper writers, and their pinking at each other to "satisfy their honour." Passing, however, from the individual, a fair way of testing the truth of the proposition as applied to nations is to ascertain, whether any nation has ever referred to arbitration questions affecting its honour. Fortunately, the idea of arbitration is not quite a new thing. Some illustrious cases have occurred, wherein such questions as the honour of a national flag, the protection of the lives and property of the citizens of a nation in a foreign country, territorial rights, and even the method in which the internal law of a country had been administered, have been referred to arbitration. I need not dilate on each incident; the mere enumeration of the instances will be sufficient to refute the objections. There was

↓ the settlement of the Boundary Claims between England and America, by commissioners, in 1783; the settlement of the Compensation Claims between England and America, by the Emperor of Russia as arbitrator, in 1822; the attempted settlement of the Maine Boundary between England and America, by the King of the Netherlands as arbitrator, in 1831, a dispute finally arranged ten years after by Lord Ashburton and Mr. Webster; the settlement of the dispute between the United States and Chili and Peru, the King of the Belgians arbitrator, in 1821; the settlement of the Portendic Claims, between England and France, the King of Prussia arbitrator, in 1835; questions between the United States and Paraguay, in 1859, between the United States and New Granada, and between the United States and Costa Rica, settled by Commissioners in 1860; between the United States and Peru, settled by the King of the Belgians as the arbitrator, in 1863; the settlement of the question as to Puget Sound, between England and the United States in 1869; the settlement of the questions in dispute between England and Greece, by means of the good offices of France, in 1849; the settlement of the dispute between England and Brazil, the King of the Belgians arbitrator; the settlement of the dispute between Turkey and Greece as to the island of Crete, by means of the Conference of the great powers, at Paris, in 1870; the settlement of the Cuban question between the United States and Spain, in 1871. Finally, we may refer with pride and satisfaction—with justifiable pride and unalloyed satisfaction—to the reference by England and the United States of the disputes as to the Alabama Claims to the Geneva Tribunal,

and of the San Juan Boundary dispute to the Emperor of Germany. Many, most of the questions thus referred to arbitration involved points intimately affecting national honour—the safety of the persons and the security of property under the national flags, and even the administration of law in some of the nations which were parties to the disputes. The claims have been adjusted, war has been prevented, and the nations are richer, happier, and wiser than though battles had added to what is called national glory, and wounds had been left to rankle and fester by national defeat. What has been done may again be done; it may increasingly be done. The range of questions to be referred to arbitration may be enlarged; the moral authority of arbitrators may be extended; the civilised world will grow increasingly familiar with the idea, and learn more and more to admire, respect, and imitate such precedents. It is not enthusiastic to believe that the example of England as to the Alabama Claims will be followed, or that the verdict of the British Parliament in favour of Mr. Richard's motion cannot fail to bear fruit—fruit full of blessings to all mankind. We aim to convince firstly the wisest and best of all nations; the rest will follow in due time.

Of all means of protecting and maintaining honour, the fighting of international duels, by means of armies, is the most brutal and stupid. "Providence," said Napoleon, "is on the side of the strongest battalions." "The art of war" declares the same authority, "consists in having greater force at any assailed point than your enemy." Not the righteous cause but the ablest general and the strongest army prevails. Honour? What did honour

avail to little Denmark in its struggle with Austria and Prussia for Schleswig and Holstein? England made the conquest of the rebellious American colonies a "point of honour:" happily for mankind, England's notions about national honour could not prevent the establishment of the United States. When the King of Prussia partially countenanced the candidature of a Hohenzollern prince for the throne of Spain, France tortured the matter into "a question of honour." The armed maintenance of her "honour" has cost her the fall of the Buonapartes, the siege of Paris, the loss of two provinces, the disgrace of her soldiers, and millions on millions added to her debt. It certainly cannot be questioned that the honour of nations is far more likely to be guarded in the peace-seeking debates of a tribunal of arbitration, than preserved on battle-fields, where only one of the combatants can triumph, and then only in the destruction or discomfiture of the other. The glory of Sedan to Germany meant the ignominy of Sedan to France.

If questions in which the honour of nations is involved may properly be referred to a tribunal of arbitration, how much more reasonably may those questions be referred which involve only property. To this extent, at least, the practice of nations has begun to conform to the edicts of reason. No nation would now go to war on such paltry grounds as a money claim, or a claim which money would satisfy. The reference of the Alabama claims must come to be regarded as the only feasible precedent in parallel cases for the future. International progress has thus worked along the same lines as national progress. Men consent to refer to

legal tribunals disputes as to property before they learn to refer disputes as to honour. May not the analogy be complete?

A further difficulty is urged: "How in such a case as the outbreak of the Ashantees, or the rising of the Maories, could arbitration be effectually applied?"

We know at present too little of the real origin of the Ashantee war, the grievances of which the natives complain, the nature of the bargain made with them by the Dutch, or how far the English have violated the contract, to be able to fairly argue the subject. On two points we may feel clear—there must be no appropriation of territory, and until every pacific means is exhausted extreme measures must be deferred. Who will dare to say that prior to besieging their capital, no inquiry shall be instituted into their grievances, and that, if found to be just, no redress for the past, and no pledges for the future shall be made? Of course the intermediation of a third power in such a case may be surrounded with difficulties, and even seem ridiculously unsuited to the circumstances; but the principle of arbitration instead of war is a ductile and plastic thing, it is susceptible of a hundred adaptations; whereas the contrary principle of fighting on every provocation is blindly fixed, and contracted because blind.*

As to the Maories, this nation has its choice of methods—peaceful negotiation or extermination. Which of the two has been hitherto chiefly adopted we know to our

* Since the above was written, it is most gratifying to know that Mr. Bright, at Birmingham, has advocated a pacific policy, and the future abandonment of such settlements on the African coast. Only the suppression of the slave trade justified their establishment, and this object no longer suffices to warrant their maintenance.

shame. Long may the last words of the murdered Bishop Paterson linger in our hearts! We goad a race into fury, and seek to shoot them down because they writhe, and turn, and try to sting! It is not saying too much to assert that the withdrawal of the English regiments from New Zealand has induced the colonists to settle peacefully the disturbance which most recently threatened to embroil the inhabitants of that island. The circumstance refutes the old fallacy that "to be fully prepared for war is the most efficient mode of preserving peace." The system of treating inferior and dependent races which has prevailed in the past needs to be thoroughly reformed. Surely the old policy of spoliation, intentional breaches of contracts, and extermination cannot always continue. If there is one subject more than another on which Christian ministers ought to raise a voice of warning and denunciation, it is against the frauds which have so often been practised by superior on inferior races, the moral corruption entailed upon them by the introduction of the "fire-water," and the immediate resort to murder and banishment in the event of the races, whom civilisation has thus defrauded and degraded, daring to resist.

A further difficulty is urged: "If nations were to agree to an international tribunal, how, without physical force, could that tribunal secure the acceptance of its awards?"

If I were contending for the immediate total disarmament of Europe—which, if only for police purposes, is obviously impossible—or urging that war should in no case be undertaken, this objection would stagger me. What is it, however, that already gives force to the

decisions of any congress of nations? The knowledge that in the event of any one nation refusing to be bound by the stipulations of the treaty-arrangement, it will be confronted by a combination of nations, which would paralyse its opposition. Such a motive would not fail to operate if, instead of an occasional congress, there were a more or less permanent International Board of Commissioners, with broad limits to their jurisdiction, representing all Europe, and, in due time, all the civilised world. Of course, before arbitration is practicable, the parties to a dispute must be willing to arbitrate, amenable to reason, agreed as to a tribunal, and also agreed as to the terms of the dispute to be referred. I do not expect that such a condition is attainable all at once; but the attainment of such a condition is only a question of growth. As soon as nations become generally convinced that such a condition is desirable, it is thereby rendered possible. Our immediate work is to labour to convince mankind. The reign of brute force must precede the reign of order and law, just as the earth was a chaos before it became a cosmos; or just as nations are barbarous before they become civilised. Is chaos and barbarity to be allowed for ever to prevail? Can we not do something to promote international order, by promoting the attempt to establish a system of international law?

But beyond the pressure of fear of meeting a triple, or quadruple, or even a quintuple alliance, in the event of resistance to the award of an international tribunal, something must also be allowed for the influence which would be exerted by public opinion in the country which proposed to resist. Something further must be allowed

for the influence of an enlightened European public opinion, educated into respecting this means of solving international problems. Would the tribunal have no arguments to urge, and would those arguments have no weight? Further still; we, at least, have all the facts of experience on our side. While we can proudly point to many cases in which the awards of arbitrators have been respected, our opponents cannot point to a case in which the award has been over-ridden. The moment it is agreed to refer a dispute to such a tribunal the war feeling begins to evaporate, the press is won over to the side of peace, the public contemplate and hope for peace, and the allaying of the war passion prevents the possibility of the agony of war. Such awards do not leave the rankling wounds which war inflicts: there is no defeat to avenge. I do not say that war can all at once be rendered impossible; I do say it can be rendered increasingly difficult. I do not pretend that Europe all at once can be induced to disband its armed forces; but I do say that Europe could be speedily persuaded to reduce its war expenditure. The most efficient means to this so desirable a consummation is the creation of a public opinion in favour of arbitration as a substitute for war, and the inducing of Europe to take steps to give to this opinion a practical effect.

Another difficulty is urged: "How shall such a tribunal be organised; of whom shall it consist; how shall the deputies vote; what shall be the limits of their powers?"

"All these, and other similar, questions are matters of detail, about which a dozen schemes might be propounded, and any one of which would be more or less

practicable. Happily, whenever public opinion has pronounced in favour of a principle, but very little difficulty has been found to devise and construct the machinery by which the principle shall be secured. The discussion of all such topics, therefore, need not now occupy our time. What has already been attempted in this direction, in the diversified form of the Amphictyonic Council, the Achæan League, the Lycian Confederacy, the League of the Hanse Towns, the Holy Alliance, the Congress of Panama, such an International Conference as sat in London in 1871, or such an International Congress as Louis Napoleon proposed, shows that the creation of machinery is not difficult if the nations were to be at all agreed upon adopting the principle. We propose no Utopian scheme of the disarmament of one nation as an example to the rest: for the moment, we ask that England shall press upon the attention of the other great powers the serious consideration of the subject. We hope that the voluntary conference of jurists so shortly to assemble at Brussels to discuss the topic of international law, may become the first of a series, by-and-by to be recognised by Parliaments, to guide the policy of cabinets, and affect the future relations of all countries of the world.

I acknowledge that I am oppressed by the weight of two other difficulties: the first is to be found in the attitude on this subject assumed by too many influential members of the press; the second is to be found in the tone and temper of the ruling classes of Europe.

And first the press. When I look back at the Crimean campaign, and remember how few were the reasons why England should go to war with Russia, how

many were the reasons why we should have preserved the peace of Europe, how easy it would have been to have preserved that peace, how speedily the comparatively paltry questions then really at issue could have been settled by arbitration and diplomacy ; and when I also remember how day by day so many newspapers were lashing the people of this country into fury—rousing a storm, a whirlwind of passion which nothing save slaughter would pacify ; a fever of rage only to be allayed by the shedding of human blood—I am reluctantly obliged to believe that the creator of that war was the newspaper press. Of course, there were noble exceptions at that time among our journals, just as there were a few far-seeing statesmen—and, stalwart among the foremost, the honoured names of Richard Cobden and John Bright—who saw clearly the injustice, and warned the country against the impolicy of the struggle. The war-press drowned their words of reason by the clamours and outcries of passion ; and, roused into fury, England rushed into war. What have we gained by it ? The neutralisation of the Black Sea has been rightly relinquished ; new fortresses begin to frown on the coasts of the Crimea ; Sheffield is furnishing the iron-plates with which they are being clothed with armour ; Sebastopol has become to us the memory of bootless bravery, the cemetery of thousands of English heroes, the bottomless well into which we poured millions of wasted treasure ; and to the Russians, the token of galling defeat. The press, the newspaper press, has proved that it is, indeed, a power in the state, but a power not always on the side of wisdom or right. I think with sorrow and indignation of the tone assumed

by some of our journals in relation to the Geneva arbitration. I should have despaired had such sentiments infected the mind of the Government, and am only glad that the good sense of England has rendered those daily and weekly grumblers impotent.

When the question was agitating France whether there should be war with Germany, those of us who then read the French journals will remember the transcendent audacity of the statements of some of them. We shall remember how those journals urged on the conflict; lauded with extravagant eulogy the French army; depreciated with extravagant falsehoods the German forces; distorted every incident into an intentional insult; raked together every fact that could embitter, make savage, and inflame Frenchmen against the Germans; and prompted the catch-cry that rung through Paris, *à Berlin!* That war, stupendous in disaster as it was unjustifiable in inception, was, to a large extent, the creation of those *litterateurs* who do so much to form and guide national opinion—the writers for the daily press. If there could be a conspiracy of European editors, leagued to foment a war, there are no two nations in Europe which could not be enraged into conflict within three months. I yield to no man in my admiration for the press: it is at once a triumph of liberty, and a safeguard of freedom; a monument of progress, and a safety-valve through which incendiary and explosive sentiments may generally almost harmlessly evaporate; yet I deplore that certain sections of the press seem to hold it as their first duty to the country, with or without provocation, to laud John Bull, and to snub and insult all the rest of mankind. I wish

that such word-valiant writers could be pressed into the front ranks of the army, and take the first consequences of the conflicts they toil to provoke !

I confess myself depressed when I consider the tone and temper of the ruling classes of Europe. The practice and prescription of centuries have raised up in each nation a numerous and influential class of men, whose interest lies in the fomenting and carrying on of war. The real interest of the vast majority of every nation is to be found in peace. War dislocates all industry ; engulphs all savings ; loads countries with debt ; lessens the comforts, the decencies, and even the necessities of every family ; ravages wide districts ; maims, mutilates, or slays thousands and tens of thousands of the adult male population, the very pick of the people, and in the prime of their youthful vigour ; corrupts the character, and cripples the progress of the nations which engage in it. The burden of all this falls most heavily on the people ; yet we have created a military class whose interest traverses that of the people ! Hopes of pre-eminence, hopes of promotion, hopes of booty, hopes of escaping the monotony of inaction, and hopes of practising in earnest the arts which they have been so sedulously taught, all conspire to make the military class restless in times of peace, and to render them clamorous advocates for war. The profession of arms has been made honourable ; it attracts to itself thousands of sons and nephews from the more influential families. The weight of the landed interest, on which, be it remembered, the ruin produced by war falls more lightly than on the manufacturing and commercial classes, is thus easily brought to support the military classes.

High priests of the gospel of peace bless the banners of war, invoke the god of battles—what a devil that god of battles must be—and pray for the success of their arms in the conflict, while the people, the long-enduring people, find the money wherewith to pay the cost, and the common soldiers—poor wretches—who are slaughtered on the horrible field! I ask, “Are our rulers ready for international arbitration?” If the question is not regarded as quite beneath their notice, a considerable section of the press will sneeringly answer “No.” I turn to the people and ask, “Are the people ready?” Let the people declare against war, and where will our rulers obtain the forces to do their fighting? It is indeed a people’s question, and earnestly should the people be taught to study it.

I have dwelt so lengthily on the difficulties which beset international arbitration, as to have left myself but little space for a glance at the advantages which would accrue from its adoption. There is, however, the less need of dilation on this topic, inasmuch as nobody is so insane as to assert that a state of war is better than a state of peace. Before such an audience (a conference of ministers) it would be unwarrantable to assume that the blessings attendant on peace needed an argument, or that the cause of peace could lack an advocate. I may, therefore, content myself with a mere enumeration of the more prominent advantages which would result from the general recognition of international arbitration as a means of settling international disputes without war.

The first result would be a *partial disarmament of Europe, and the consequent reduction of war expenditure.* Think what this means. There are now in Europe over

three millions of men bearing arms. Dr. Larroque, of Paris, has computed the annual cost to Europe, even in times of peace, of this improvident and exhaustive policy. His calculation is suggestive:—

The annual amount of the military and naval budgets of Europe is	} 119 millions.
Loss of labour by the withdrawal from productive industry of these soldiers	} 132 millions.
The interest on capital invested in military and naval establishments	} 30 millions.
Total annual cost.	281 millions.

This, observe, does not include any of the costs entailed by actual war. It is, astounding thought! the peace expenditure of Europe; the expense involved in preventing war, by being prepared for it! Who will say that this frightful expenditure is absolutely necessary for the protection of Europe, or that it could not be reduced without danger? Has this preparedness for war preserved the peace? Let the French expedition to Mexico answer the question! Let the insane assault of France on Germany answer it?

The second result would be *the settlement and adoption of a Code of International Law*. I need not dwell on this point, as I understand that Mr. Freestone, at the soirée this evening, intends to address himself specially to this topic, to show its importance, its necessity, and the utterly unsatisfactory state in which the question now lies. The interests at stake are incalculable as to value: no code at present can justly be said to exist.

A third result would be *the prevention of war panics*.

The periodical recurrence of these panics would be ludicrous, if they were not so terribly costly. The Martello towers which surround so considerable a portion of our coast, now usually converted into coast-guard stations, and useless for purposes of defence; the foolish and futile fortifications which are crumbling on the heights overlooking Portsmouth, also useless for purposes of defence; and the two millions of extra expenditure in 1871, undertaken to satisfy the timid, an addition so easily imposed, but so difficult to be got rid of when once incurred, are proofs of the folly of such panics. The paradox is startling: at the very moment that authorities assure us that the nation is stronger than ever, we are the most prone to take alarm. When we are most prepared for war is the time when public terror insists on our increasing our armaments. We were alarmed by France in the zenith of its strength, and the creation of our volunteer system was the answer of England to the doughty bombast of a few French colonels. And we were again alarmed by France in the nadir of its weakness. Nations are repeating the escapades of which feudal barons were once guilty. When the Bohun learned that the Howard had doubled the number of his retainers, suspecting mischief, forthwith he tripled his little army; and then all the great chiefs imitated their pernicious example. Preparedness for war provoked war: the retainers of the Bohun soon insulted the retainers of the Howard, and the panic produced the very collision which it had feared. We have outgrown such little terrors, and all their consequent evils, by substituting law for force; but the nations in their relationships still pursue the fatal

feudal policy; they are still hampered and cursed by such barbarous bonds.

A fourth result would be *the facilities afforded by such an international congress as we contemplate, for negotiating treaties of commerce, which then could be made to include all nations instead of, as at present, only two or three.* This advantage is so manifest that to name it is enough.

A further advantage would be that *an end would be put to the present insane contest of military engineers between guns versus iron plates.* How else it is to end it would be difficult to say. We are fast approaching a trial of the old ironical problem—"When an irresistible force meets an immovable object, what will ensue?" We oscillate between the irresistible gun and the invulnerable shield. Now the cannon seems to have gained the day, and now the armour. If we do not sink all our ships with the dead weight of their armour-plates, at least we sink our money. And if we do not find a cannon which our competitors in the costly game cannot surpass, at least we are approaching the solution of the problem how to fashion a gun so heavy and so powerful that few vessels could carry its weight, or endure its recoil. How long is the waste to continue? How shall it be made to cease?

Other advantages will suggest themselves to every mind; but I have already trespassed too long on your forbearance. I have only one more topic to consider.

It will be said by many, "This notion of international arbitration is a glorious dream, a fond, an Utopian fancy; to realise it, however, even in part, is impossible." Impossible! It is not the first time we have heard

great measures of public importance hindered, if not prevented, by this word, impossible. "Impossible!" cried the owners of pocket boroughs, many freemen, and the landed interest, when the project was mooted to extend the franchise in boroughs to £10 householders, and to sweep away those provocatives to corruption, the rotten boroughs of England: yet Earl Grey's Reform Bill became law! "Impossible!" exclaimed the judges on the bench, bishops from their thrones, and the thousand and one persons implicated in the crime, and interested in the profits, when the abolition of the slave trade and the emancipation of the slaves were proposed: yet, thank God, no slave can now exist where English or American drums sound the roll-call round the world, where the English or the American flag is saluted by the morning sun, where the language of Shakspeare is spoken, and the Bible is read in the English tongue! "Impossible!" declared the landlords and their tenant-farmers, and all whom they could cozen, delude, or bribe into maintaining their gigantic monopoly, when the nation refused to remain taxed for the benefit of a few; and hungry millions, remembering their fainting and famished wives and children, demanded "cheap bread:" yet the odious corn-laws have been swept away, and we have recently seen the last shilling of duty disappear! Men have proclaimed "impossible" to the Catholic Emancipation Bill, granting to Catholic citizens equality before the law; the Municipal Corporation Bill, guaranteeing to the people the right of self-government; the abolition of University tests, nationalising the higher education, and permitting scholarship to earn the prizes established for scholars, without regard

to their views as to sectarian theology ; and to the abolition of the vicious and foolish system of promotion in the army by purchase ; they have done their best to make such strides in civilisation as impossible in fact as they pretended them to be in theory ; but the nation rose in the majesty of conviction, in the grandeur of its strength, and both the anachronisms and their defenders sank down before its stately and triumphant march.

To a people, convinced of the righteousness of a principle, and discerning the available means of carrying that principle into operation, there is no such thing as impossible. God has given to men the moulding of all their social institutions, the guiding of their social destiny. He, His spirit, and His angels are on the side of peace-lovers and peace-makers ; doubt it who may, the sure promise still stands—men *shall* “beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, nation *shall* not lift up sword against nation, neither *shall* they learn war any more.” The arts of peace shall supersede the arts of war ; the blessings of peace shall supplant the horrors of war ; and the fruits of peace shall reward the sacred toil of mankind !



